

Flu Vaccines, H1N1, and Multiple Sclerosis

In years past people with Multiple Sclerosis were advised not to get flu shots due to concern the “live” virus would activate progression of MS. The current information about the new flu shot, H1N1 combines old and new philosophies. According to the National MS Society, the regular flu shot is a de-activated, “killed” vaccine and can be safely taken by those with MS who are on the disease modifying medications – Avonex, Betaseron, Copaxone, Rebif, Novantrone and Tysabri.

Dr. Aaron Miller, of the National MS Society recommends against taking the FluMist which is a live, weakened vaccine for people who have MS, particularly people on immunosuppressive medications such as mitoxantrone (Novantrone), cyclophosphamide (Cytoxan), azathioprine (Imuran), and methotrexate. People whose immune systems are suppressed by medication are more likely to develop a severe infection or increased MS disease activity from FluMist and the interaction between the “live” vaccine and disease modifying medications is unknown. In September 2009 the FDA approved four H1N1 vaccines. Three of the H1N1 vaccines are injections of de-activated or “killed” virus and considered safe for people with MS. The fourth vaccine is a nasal spray of live vaccine and should be avoided by people with MS.



*Coming
Soon -
to your
mailbox*

Please look
inside for
Multiple
Sclerosis
Services
Information

Since the supply of H1N1 vaccine is limited, priority is given to: pregnant women; people who live with or care for infants less than 6 months old; healthcare and emergency services personnel; children and young adults ages 6 months to 24 years of age; and people age 25-64 with medical conditions and at risk of developing flu-related complications. People with MS and other disabling conditions are not part of this high priority group, but it is important to remember viruses can trigger MS exacerbations. Those who have severe MS symptoms or breathing problems are candidates for the H1N1 vaccine. Additional information can be found at www.cdc.gov or www.flu.gov.

Source: www.nationalmssociety.org/news

The ADA, Employment and Multiple Sclerosis

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and has five “Titles” or protected groups– Employment, Public Services, Public Accommodations, Communications (telephone systems) and Miscellaneous. This article focuses on employment issues related to Multiple Sclerosis.

Public and private businesses with 15 or more employees are required to comply with Title I – employment. Religious organizations, labor unions, and companies that use temporary employment companies are covered by the ADA while the federal government, Native American tribes, and tax-exempt private membership clubs are not.

To be covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act an individual must:

- Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits functioning in one or more major life activities
- Have a record of such impairment
- Be regarded as having such impairment(s) that include but are not limited to walking,

seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, working, concentrating, sleeping, lifting, interacting with others, and self care

Disability in the workplace is defined as being “significantly restricted in the ability to perform either a class of jobs or a broad range of jobs in various classes as compared to the average person having comparable training, skills and abilities. The inability to perform a single, particular job does not constitute a substantial limitation in the major life activity of work.”

People not protected by Title I of the ADA include:

- People with disabilities who pose a direct threat to the health or safety to self or others
- Abusers of illegal substances
- Employees who use alcohol in the workplace
- Homosexuals, transvestites, bisexuals, or transsexuals (sexual orientation is not considered a disability)
- Voyeurs or people with other sexual disorders
- People with disorders such as kleptomania, compulsive gambling, or pyromania and
- People whose medical conditions can be mitigated with assistive devices or medications.

The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that one often comes from a strong will, and the other from a strong won't.

Henry Ward Beecher

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act defines a qualified person with a disability as a person who can perform the essential job functions with or without accommodations. The employer is not required to give preference to people with a disability who are not qualified for a job, nor does the ADA protect individuals who are no longer able to perform the essential job functions.



Essential job functions are the primary duties a worker must be able to perform with reasonable accommodations.

employees or customers. Accommodations are generally decided on a case-by-case basis. Requesting reasonable accommodation is a process that begins with the individual disclosing a condition which needs to be accommodated to perform the essential job functions. With the focus on the job function, the employee and employer work together to identify the accommodation needed.

A function is considered “essential” when:

- A position exists to perform that function
- A limited number of other employees can perform the function and/or
- The function is highly specialized and the person in that position is hired for their expertise
- Essential job functions do not include marginal or unnecessary tasks not required to perform the job.

Essential job functions must be in the written job description given to all job applicants. The employer usually determines the essential job functions.

Some qualified individuals with a disability may need reasonable accommodations to perform essential job functions which can include:

- Restructuring a facility or a job
- Modifying work schedules
- Reassignment to a vacant position
- Modification of equipment or installing new equipment

Reasonable accommodations do not require changing essential job functions, lowering production standards, or providing personal items such as wheelchairs, or eyeglasses. Nor does it mean providing accommodations that cause undue hardship. Undue hardship is an accommodation that is costly, requires extensive renovations, or that negatively affects other

Accommodations for symptoms of MS have included installing new equipment (large-print computer programs for vision impairment); restructuring the job (answer telephones instead of data entry for hand tremors); modify work schedules; (a longer lunch break to prevent fatigue); making a restroom wheelchair accessible; or working from home.

Research has found more than half of accommodations cost nothing. The Americans with Disabilities Act became law nearly 20 years ago and has benefitted many people, not just those with disabilities. For information call the MS Services program at (319) 232-6671.

Source: Rumrill, P.D., Hennessey, M.L., Nissen, S.W.; Employment and the Americans with Disabilities Act; Employment Issues and Multiple Sclerosis; Demos Medical Publishing; 2008; 89-113

Informational sources available to answer questions about employment issues and the ADA include the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); the Job Accommodation Network; the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the International Center for Disability Information at West Virginia University. Other resources include Vocational Rehabilitation for job re-training and placement; Iowa Workforce Development which offers services for people with disabilities; the Plan for Achieving Self-Sufficiency (PASS) at Social Security which enables people to keep their Disability and Medicare benefits while they are employed; and Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities (MEPD).

Thank You Supporters

Contributions are vital to the continuation of services provided by MS Services. Thank you to the following for their financial support.

- Mr. and Mrs. David C. Adams
- Ms. Nancy Beaupre
- Mrs. Ruth I. Bowers
- Mrs. Sylvia Grekoff
- Ms. Marian J. Melcher
- Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sauter
- Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa

The following memorials were received in memory of Helen Weikert.

- Mr. and Mrs. Duane Bartak
- Ms. Ruth A. Bartels
- Ms. Marilyn L. Bigelow
- Mr. and Mrs. Donald E. Brown
- Ms. Iva M. Daily
- Mrs. N. Kay England
- Mr. and Mrs. Jack K. Gregersen
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- Mrs. Cathy J. Kimm and Mr. Ira A. Kimm
- Ms. Marlys Moodie
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- Ms. Virginia M. Schwake Hocken
- Mr. and Mrs. WM R. Trotter
- Ms. Marlene M. Vaughn
- Mr. and Mrs. Jon Welcher
- Mr. and Mrs. Jon M. Jermann



Thank you to all who showed their support in this year's 5K Run, Walk and Roll on September 19th. We hope to see you again next fall.

A Note From Diane

I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the only decisive element in my life.

It's my personal approach that creates the climate.

It's my daily mood that makes the weather.

I have tremendous power to make a person's life miserable or joyous.

I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.

I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

In all situations, It is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated and a person humanized or dehumanized.

*~Dr. Haim
Ginott*



MS Support Group Meetings

NOVEMBER

Thurs. - Nov. 5	1:30 pm	Buchanan	St. John's Catholic Church Rectory	209 5th Ave. NE, Independence
Wed. - Nov. 11	10:30 am	Bremer/Butler	Redeemer Lutheran Church	2001 West Bremer, Waverly
Wed. - Nov. 18	11:00 am	Waterloo	EPI Office	760 Ansborough Ave., Waterloo
Tama - No group in November				

DECEMBER

Thurs. - Dec. 3	1:30 pm	Buchanan	St. John's Catholic Church Rectory	209 5th Ave. NE, Independence
Wed. - Dec. 9	10:30 am	Bremer/Butler	Redeemer Lutheran Church	2001 West Bremer, Waverly
Wed. - Dec. 16	11:00 am	Waterloo	EPI Office	760 Ansborough Ave., Waterloo
Wed. - Dec. 30	9:30 am	Tama	Senior Center - Community Building	103 S. Church St., Toledo

JANUARY

Thurs. - Jan. 7	1:30 pm	Buchanan	St. John's Catholic Church Rectory	209 5th Ave. NE, Independence
Wed. - Jan. 13	10:30 am	Bremer/Butler	Redeemer Lutheran Church	2001 West Bremer, Waverly
Wed. - Jan. 20	11:00 am	Waterloo	EPI Office	760 Ansborough Ave., Waterloo
Wed. - Jan. 27	9:30 am	Tama	Senior Center - Community Building	103 S. Church St., Toledo

Multiple Sclerosis Services assists and supports people who have Multiple Sclerosis and those who care about them adjust to life with a chronic illness by providing emotional support, current information and connection to needed community services.



P.O. Box 4090
760 Ansborough Ave.
Waterloo, IA 50704
319-232-6671 ph.
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Multiple Sclerosis Services

Multiple Sclerosis Services, founded in 1980 in Waterloo, Iowa, as Area VII MS Service League, was a non-profit organization created to provide services and information to address the day-to-day impact of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) on individuals and families.

Today's MS Services is a program of Exceptional Persons, Inc and continues to serve families coping with MS by supplying emotional support, current information, and connection to needed community services. MS Services is governed by a volunteer Advisory Committee made up of people who have MS, their family members and community representatives.

MS Services is funded by area United Way agencies, the South Tama United Fund a part of the Northeast Iowa Community Foundation, and private contributions. Funds are used to provide agency services. The annual audit is available for public review.

MS Services impacts over 400 families in Waterloo/Cedar Falls and the surrounding seven county areas. MS Services is not affiliated with, nor supported by, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.



Exceptional Persons, Inc.

A program of
Exceptional Persons, Inc.

MS Advisory Committee

Rudy Bernhard
Todd Evans
Kass Harper
Mary Ann Riensche
Dennis Sufflebeam

MS Services Director

Diane Holmes, LMSW

